

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose and Scope of Study.

The City of Hartwell contracted with the Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center (GMRDC) for the preparation of a comprehensive plan which meets the requirements of the Georgia Planning Act. Minimum planning standards for local plans in Georgia require that the following elements be included: population, housing, economic development, natural and historic resources, land use, community facilities, transportation, intergovernmental coordination and implementation.

The comprehensive plan has been prepared in accordance with the mandated three-step planning process, which is described as follows: 1) an inventory of data for each planning element and projections/ forecasts where applicable to provide the local governments with a factual and conceptual basis for making informed decisions about the future of the community, and an analysis and assessment of the data in terms of their significance to the community; 2) a statement of issues, needs, goals, policies and objectives; and 3) an implementation strategy which sets forth an overall strategy for meeting the community's ambitions both for the short-term (the next five years) and the entire planning horizon (to the year 2025).

The comprehensive plan was prepared in accordance with minimum procedural requirements for local plans, which include a public hearing prior to substantive work on the plan, and a public hearing prior to transmittal of the comprehensive plan for review by the Regional Development Center and Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

1.2. Organization of the Plan.

The Plan is divided into several chapters which generally correspond to minimum planning elements. The implementation component of the plan is concentrated into the last chapter, which includes a comprehensive listing of all statements of goals, policies and objectives, as well as the Short Term Work Program. These statements were placed in the final chapter so that a policy plan and implementations component can, if necessary, be extracted from the plan text and provided to those individuals who desire to know the various policies and programs of the city, but who do not wish to review the entire plan document.

1.3. Location.

The City of Hartwell is located in the northeast portion of Georgia in the Piedmont Plateau and serves as the county seat for Hart County. Hartwell is about 95 miles northeast of Atlanta, Georgia, 40 miles northeast of Athens, Georgia, and 27 miles southwest of Anderson, South Carolina. Map 1-1 indicates the location of Hartwell in relation to the State of Georgia. Map 1-2 is a base map of Hartwell.

1.4. Citizen Participation.

As a part of the planning process each local government must provide and implement opportunities to encourage public participation during the preparation of the comprehensive plan. The purpose of this is to insure that citizens and other stakeholders are aware of the planning process, are provided opportunities to comment on the local plan elements, and have adequate access to the process of defining the community's vision, values, priorities, goals, policies, and implementation strategies.

At a minimum, the public participation program must provide for: adequate notice to keep the general public informed of the emerging plan; opportunities for the public to provide written comments on the plan; hold the required public hearings; and, provide notice to property owners through advertisements in the newspaper (legal organ) of the planning effort soliciting participation and comments. In addition, Hartwell must provide opportunities for public participation through other means and methods to help articulate a community vision and develop associated goals and implementation program.

A planning schedule for completion of the plan must be developed and published. The City of Hartwell Plan schedule is found below.

ACTIVITY	DATE
Initial Public Hearing	September 2003
Steering Committee Solicited and Selected	October 2003
Plan Kick-Off Meeting	October 2003
Data Collection	November 2003 – August 2005
Committee Analysis	November 2003 – August 2005
Community Survey and Vision Development	January 2004 – December 2004
Articulation of Needs and Goals	April 2005 – August 2005
Work Program Development	August 2005
Second Public Hearing	September - October 2005
Plan Submitted for Review	November 2005
Plan Adopted	January 2006

In an effort to secure adequate citizen participation in the planning process, a Growth Strategies Advisory Committee was established. This committee was comprised of 18 persons appointed by the City of Hartwell. The Committee met with the Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center planning staff to provide input and review drafts of all elements of the plan and assist in the development of statements of goals, policies, objectives, and programs.

The next course of action was to conduct a community survey. The Advisory Committee developed a survey consisting of questions they deemed important to the community. The survey was then distributed and collected through the city utilities department.

CITY OF HARTWELL PUBLIC OPINION POLL

The City of Hartwell government is working with the Georgia Mountain Regional Development Council and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs to develop a 10-year Comprehensive Plan. The State of Georgia requires that each municipal government and county government complete a comprehensive plan if they want to be eligible for state funds for community improvement. To begin this process, the Mayor of Hartwell have assembled a planning committee comprised of local citizens.

An important component of this process is input from individuals in our community. The purpose of this poll is to try to determine the attitudes and opinions of the residents of Hartwell related to issues concerning Land Use, Historic and Natural Resources, and Economic Development. The responses you give in this survey will help influence how our community grows over the next 10 years.

Please take the time necessary to give your honest responses and comments to the questions on this survey. Thank you for your time and consideration for continuing to make our community a great place to live.

1. How long have you resided in Union County? 0-5 years _____ 5-10 _____ 10 or more _____
2. Do you live here full time? Yes _____ No _____
If no, where is your legal residence? _____
3. Do you work in Hartwell? Yes _____ No _____
If no, how far do you drive to work? 0-10 miles _____ Over 10 miles _____
4. Do you have any school-age children? Yes _____ No _____
If yes, how many? _____
5. What is your educational level? High School _____ College _____ GED _____

Growth and Its Impact

6. Has progress in the level of service in the following areas in Hartwell in the past 10 years been favorable?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
A. Streets/sidewalks	()	()
B. Commercial/Industrial Development	()	()
C. Education	()	()
D. Housing	()	()
E. Public Services	()	()
F. Recreation	()	()
G. Health Care	()	()
H. Other	()	()

7. What is it that you like the most about City of Hartwell?

	<u>Most</u>	<u>Least</u>
A. Residential Areas	()	()
B. Public Services	()	()
C. Employment Opportunities	()	()
D. Historic Preservation	()	()
E. Shopping Facilities	()	()
F. Recreation Opportunities	()	()
G. Natural Resources	()	()
H. Health Care Services	()	()
I. Other	()	()

8. Do you desire progress in the next ten years, in the following areas?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
A. Road Construction	()	()
B. Commercial/Industrial Employment	()	()
C. New Schools	()	()
D. New Housing	()	()
E. Public Service Facilities	()	()
F. Recreation Facilities	()	()
G. Natural Resources Preservation	()	()
H. Health Care Services	()	()
I. Other	()	()

9. What do you desire Hartwell to be in the next ten years?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
A. Commercial/Industrial Employment Center	()	()
B. Retail Trade Center	()	()
C. Residential Community	()	()
D. Camping/Resort	()	()
E. Retirement Community	()	()
F. Tourist/Recreation Attraction	()	()
G. Other	()	()

10. What do you think the county should do to promote future growth?
- | | Yes | No |
|--|-----|-----|
| A. Provide funds for public works development | () | () |
| B. Expand commercial/industrial recruiting efforts | () | () |
| C. Expand tourism/recreation efforts | () | () |
| D. Provide local growth controls | () | () |
| E. Provide additional revenue sources | () | () |
| F. Provide Natural Resources Controls | () | () |
| G. Other | () | () |
- Would you support "limited" land use restriction () ()
 Would you support "strict" (e. zoning) land use restrictions? () ()
 Do you favor commercial/residential inspections and enforcement? () ()
 If yes, would you be willing to pay for this inspection? () ()
 Would you support public transportation? () ()
 Do you desire additional rental properties () ()
 Comments _____

Economy and Taxes

14. What priority would you place on the following economic issues?
- | | High | Med | Low |
|--|------|-----|-----|
| A. Create and retain well-paying jobs | () | () | () |
| B. Provide tax incentives for business to locate in Hartwell | () | () | () |
| C. Reduce government regulations | () | () | () |
| D. Increase government regulations | () | () | () |
| E. Other | () | () | () |
15. To increase revenue and promote economic development would you support the following?
- | | Stores | Restaurants | Both | Neither |
|------------------------------------|--------|-------------|------|---------|
| A. Beer and wine sales in the City | () | () | () | () |
| B. Liquor sales in the city? | () | () | () | () |

Particular Concerns

15. What priority would you place on the following government services?
- | | High | Med | Low |
|---|------|-----|-----|
| A. Protection Services (police, fire, etc.) | () | () | () |
| B. Health Services | () | () | () |
| C. Transportation | () | () | () |
| D. Educational Resources | () | () | () |
| E. Environmental Protection | () | () | () |
| F. Growth Regulations | () | () | () |
| G. Recreation & Parks | () | () | () |
| H. Water & Sewer & Gas | () | () | () |
16. What are the greatest potentials this community has that need to be capitalized upon in the future?
17. Please tell us what are the obstacles that this community must overcome for it to foster new growth in the future?

Optional Age Group

Under 25 _____ 26-35 _____ 36-50 _____ 51-60 _____ 61 and up _____

Again, thank you for your time and concern.

The survey results identified that local citizens like Hartwell because of its quiet residential areas, excellent public services and recreation opportunities. Citizens also identified concerns over the lack of employment opportunities, limited health care services in the community as well as the lack of cultural arts and related cultural activities.

Respondents to the survey indicated that they desire Hartwell to be the commercial/industrial employment center for the county over the next ten years, and that this is the most important issue the city needs to address. Citizens identified that active recruiting efforts and the provision of tax incentives for businesses to locate in Hartwell should be some of the methods to promote future growth in the city.

Other comments included better cooperation between local government agencies and improved traffic patterns and control, including alternatives to driving.

COMMUNITY VISION

A vision for the future of the community must be included in the comprehensive plan. The community vision is intended to provide a complete picture of what the community desires to become. The community vision must be based on public input, the assessment of current and future needs and be supported by the goals, policies and objectives in the comprehensive plan.

In addition, there must be consistency between the community vision and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Quality Community Objectives as well as consistency with the community visions of other communities within the region.

COMMUNITY VISION STATEMENT

The City of Hartwell is a community blessed with an abundance of natural scenic beauty and rural character and culture. It is the vision of the City to maintain these characteristics through wise community management and service decisions and protection of all natural and cultural resources while at the same time fostering economic development and growth, which will increase the number of entrepreneurial opportunities and jobs available in the community. While recognizing the importance of traditional heritage and culture, Hartwell is a community that welcomes visitors and new residents.

CONSISTENCY WITH STATE GOALS AND QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL

Regional Identity Objective – The City of Hartwell is an active members of the Georgia Mountain Regional Development Center and is linked with the many communities within the regional through its abundance natural scenic beauty and rich Appalachian culture. Lake Hartwell is shared by three counties and two cities in Georgia as well as several other local governments in South Carolina.

Growth Preparedness Objective - Hartwell continues to make improvements in infrastructure and coordination of development service areas and activities. Additional improvements such as the development of improved regulatory guidelines for growth, economic development planning and leadership development will help the city achieve the quality growth it desires. The City has been committed to providing the necessary infrastructure to accommodate past and current growth. The city is further committed to making the necessary improvements to accommodate projected growth needs. The City also recognizes the need for improved land use and development management guidelines to assist them as they grow.

Appropriate Business and Educational Opportunity Objectives – Hartwell and Hart County is fortunate that they have a workforce with skill levels appropriate for industry and businesses in the community. With the North Georgia Technical College campus and Athens Technical College campus located in close proximity, industries in the area are able to benefit from the skills of the graduates provided by the college. The need for higher education degrees, beyond technical skills, within the county have been identified in the plan and is a goal for the future.

Employment Options Objective – There are a variety of businesses, industries and services located within Hartwell and Hart County. The location of NGT and ATC close by assists in providing a range of employment skills for local employers. The development of economic, industry marketing and recruitment plans and teams will help continue to provide a wide range of job opportunities in the area.

NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES GOAL

Heritage Preservation Objective – Hartwell is rich in historic resources. The city benefits from a very active local historic society, a Main Street Program, and a Preservation Commission that administers the local preservation ordinance. The plan calls for further preservation opportunities by identifying additional historic districts, calling for an updated survey, and encouraging protection of important sites that could potentially be lost to development.

Environmental Protection Objective – Water supply watersheds, wetlands, and flood plains are protected in Hartwell. Additional measures to protect these sensitive resources in the future are recommended in the plan.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES GOAL

Transportation Alternative Objective – Hartwell has limited alternative transportation facilities. The city contains the only public sidewalks for pedestrian travel, but there is no linkage among the facilities and much of it is in a state of repair. It is a goal of the City in the plan to develop a pedestrian sidewalk planning and facilities that meets the community's needs.

Regional Solutions Objective – Hartwell actively participates in regional programs and funding in areas of public safety, courts, public services, planning, and economic development. The city willingly participates in regional activities and solutions that will improve efficiency in service delivery and costs saving to tax payers.

HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES GOAL

Housing Opportunities Objective – The median price of a home in Hartwell is lower than the State average. However the median household income is much lower than the State average, which causes some concerns over housing affordability. However, Hartwell supports providing a whole range of housing opportunities in order for those working in the City to be able to affordably live within the city. This is evidenced by the housing activities in the Rome Street Neighborhood. The plan recommends a variety of housing types and locations meeting the needs of senior citizens and families with low or moderate incomes.

LAND USE GOAL

Traditional Neighborhood Objective – Traditional neighborhood patterns are located in the City. The City is committed to continue this type of development as there are a number of small vacant lots and properties dotted around the City that will more than likely be converted to single and multi family uses. The plan identifies the need for some development within the County to occur in close proximity to the City at higher densities, taking advantage of City infrastructure and close at distances to community goods and services. These are areas that could possibly be annexed into the city, but should occur with traditional design standard attached to them.

Infill Development Objective – Infill development opportunities exists for the City of Hartwell. The city is committed to encourage development in areas where infrastructure is already in place through the promotion of land use policies and appropriate measures.

Sense of Place Objective – The City of Hartwell is the focal point of all activity within Hart County. Most of the county businesses, services and industries are located within or adjacent to the City limits. Most city and county services, including schools and recreation are located within or adjacent to the City as well. There are several churches located within the City where people gather to worship and socialize. The City is further committed to help Hartwell remain the focal point of community activity. This can be accomplished by adequate enforcement, proper administration and timely updates of local ordinances including the preservation ordinance, zoning ordinance, subdivision regulation, etc.